

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DUBLIN 01149 080958Z

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 EB-08 CAB-05 CIAE-00 COME-00
DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 LAB-04
SIL-01 OC-06 CCO-00 PA-02 ICA-20 SP-02 OTPE-00
USPS-01 /089 W
-----057536 090104Z /64/21

R 061711Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0391
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL BELFAST

UNCLAS DUBLIN 01149

USEEC ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, ETEL, EAIR, EI

SUBJECT:TELEPHONE, TELEX, POSTAL AND AIRLINE STRIKES
CONTINUE.

REF: DUBLIN 889; DUBLIN 862

1. IRELAND'S POST AND TELEGRAPHS STRIKE, AFFECTING
TELEX, TELEPHONE, AND TO A LESSER EXTENT POSTAL
SERVICES, HAS ENTERED ITS 10TH WEEK WITH NO
APPARENT BREAK IN SIGHT. THE GOVERNMENT ALLOWED A
DEBATE ON THE SITUATION FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE
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PAGE 02 DUBLIN 01149 080958Z

DAIL (PARLIAMENT) APRIL 5. THE OPPOSITION POINTED
OUT THE DISASTROUS ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE STRIKE,
BUT THE MINISTER CONCERNED, P & T MINISTER FAULKNER,
SAID HE HAD DONE ALL HE COULD AND BLAMED THE STRIKE
ON "CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE UNION EXECUTIVE." FAULKNER
HAS, IN FACT, REFUSED TO MEET DIRECTLY WITH THE UNION
LEADERS, STAUNCHLY INSISTING ON DEALING ONLY WITH THE

IRISH TRADE UNION CONGRESS (ITUC) IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LETTER OF INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE PRECEDENCE. FOR THE MOMENT SETTLEMENT EFFORTS SEEM TO BE STALEMATED.

2. FOLLOWING THE DAIL DEBATE THE UNION MADE A FORMAL REQUEST TO THE ITUC FOR PERMISSION TO MOUNT AN OFFICIAL, ALL-OUT PICKET. IF GRANTED, THIS WOULD CLOSE DOWN ALL TELEX, TELEPHONE AND POSTAL SERVICES WITHIN AND TO/FROM IRELAND. WHILE THERE IS SOME DOUBT THAT THE ITUC EXECUTIVE WILL GO ALONG WITH THE REQUEST -- THE P & T UNION IS NOT VERY POPULAR JUST NOW -- THERE IS A GENERAL FEELING THAT TOTAL CLOSEDOWN, REQUIRING EMERGENCY ACTION, WOULD BE BETTER THAN THE CRIPPLING SITUATION AND STALEMATED NEGOTIATIONS IN EFFECT. MANAGEMENT AND NON-STRIKING PERSONNEL ARE MANAGING TO KEEP UP SOME COMMUNICATIONS. WE CAN, FOR INSTANCE, REACH LONDON AND WASHINGTON ABOUT HALF THE TIME. THE DANISH EMBASSY, HOWEVER, HAS TO SEND PERSONNEL TO NORTHERN IRELAND DAILY TO CALL COPENHAGEN AS ITS TELEPHONE AND TELEX ARE NORMALLY OUT. MOST PHONES WITHIN DUBLIN CAN CONTACT EACH OTHER BUT THE REST OF THE COUNTRY IS NORMALLY CUT OFF FROM THE CAPITAL.

3. THE AER LINGUS STRIKE CONTINUES DESPITE FAIRLY STRENUEOUS EFFORTS BY MANAGEMENT TO GET A SETTLEMENT. THE STRIKERS HAVE REFUSED TO ACCEPT A LABOR COURT RULING WHICH GAVE THEM MOST OF THEIR DEMANDS. AGAIN, INCREASINGLY UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 DUBLIN 01149 080958Z

FATIGUED MANAGEMENT IS FILLING IN TO KEEP SOME SERVICES GOING AS THIS STRIKE IS INTO ITS FOURTH WEEK. CHAOS REIGNS AT DUBLIN AND SHANNON AIRPORTS. SCHEDULES VARY WILDLY, BUT AN AVERAGE OF ABOUT 60 PERCENT OF SCHEDULED AER LINGUS FLIGHTS HAS BEEN MAINTAINED. THE OTHER MAJOR AIRLINE SERVICING IRELAND, BRITISH AIRWAYS, DESPITE ITS OWN WILDCAT STRIKE PROBLEMS, HAS MAINTAINED A RELIABLE SCHEDULE BUT ITS RESERVATION/BOOKING OPERATION HAS BEEN THOROUGHLY CONFUSED BY THE TELEX/TELEPHONE STRIKE -- NO AIRLINES HAVE THE USE OF COMPUTORS, FOR INSTANCE. TWA HAS BEEN HAVING ITS PROBLEMS BUT IS MAINTAINING ITS SCHEDULES AT NEARLY 100 PERCENT SEAT OCCUPANCY. WE CONTINUE TO ADVISE ANY TRAVELLERS TO AND FROM IRELAND TO MAKE LAST-MINUTE CHECKS OF RESERVATIONS AND TO MAINTAIN THEIR GOOD HUMOR. RENDAHL

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